

Insurance Patrol Building  
509 Arch Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1433

HABS  
PA,  
51-PHILA,  
467.

PHOTOGRAPH

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

HABS  
PA  
51-PHILA  
467-

ARCHITECTURAL DATA FORM

STATE	COUNTY	TOWN OR VICINITY
PENNSYLVANIA	PHILADELPHIA	PHILADELPHIA
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME)		HABS NO.
INSURANCE PATROL BUILDING		PA-1433
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES)		
509 Arch Street		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE)	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE)	
Probably 1879		
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE)		
The building housed the insurance patrol, whose function was not to fight fires but rather to save property. The activity was made possible by the insurance companies of the city. The patrol wagon was used to transport members of the patrol to fires. (con't. on page 2)		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS)		
Brick with cast-iron front.		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE)		
Two-story building. Dimensions: 27' X 205'.		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE		
The first floor of the front facade was supported by four cast-iron columns with recessed panels and simple bases and capitals. On the corners of the second story portion of the front facade were large decorative quoins. The building, which was three bays wide, (con't. on p. 2)		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED)		
Not available. (The building was demolished after this report was written).		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES		
At some later date, the large double doors were replaced with a plate glass window and the building was used for commercial purposes.		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
There is a photocopy of an old photograph showing the front facade of the building, patrol crew and wagon, in a field record folder filed under this building.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)		
Webster, Richard. <u>Philadelphia Preserved</u> . Philadelphia: Temple University, 1976.		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION	DATE	
From August 13, 1964 report by John G. Waite, NPS architect; edited by Susan McCown, Historic American Buildings Survey, April 11, 1984		

SIGNIFICANCE (continued from page 1):

It also carried salvage covers which the crew used to protect property from water and smoke damage. The patrol would also patch up the roof and walls to protect property from weather damage and then would stand guard over a gutted building to prevent looting. The building was demolished in 1964 to make way for the Independence National Historical Park. (This report was written after the demolition).

EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (continued from page 1):

originally had a large arched double doorway in the center bay for the apparatus. On either side of the apparatus doorway was a smaller double doorway, with a semi-circular arch. All of the doorway arches contained decorative keystones. The original doors were probably of wood and paneled. All of the doorways were quite tall, being perhaps 10'-12' high, and gave the effect of being heavy. The double windows in the center bay of the second floor, front facade had semi-circular arched openings with decorative keystones. The single windows in the outside bays had segmental arched openings also with decorative keystones. The sash was 2/2 with slotted wood interior shutters. The jambs of the windows were decorated with a long straight stalk with an end spiral at the sill level. Over the first floor portion of the front facade was a rather heavy cornice supported by four large brackets between which were large modillions. At the top of the building was another heavy cornice, again supported by large brackets. Between the brackets was a scalloped treatment. The center uppermost part of the cornice originally consisted of a large segmental arched panel with the name "Insurance Patrol" displayed in raised letters. Over the panel was a rather delicate crest-like decoration.